

Cultural Understanding What Is Culture?

Materials

Examples of your own culture (teacher)

My Culture journal page (Figure C)

Culture & the Land journal page (Figure D)

Journals

Pre-Planning

Prepare examples of your own culture to share with the students. They could include a type of food, clothing, celebration item, musical instrument or other object. (Remember, culture is usually a blend of many cultures.)

Prepare copies of the My Culture and Culture & the Land journal pages for each student's journal.

Culture is the beliefs and ways of life of a group of people.

Culture is *learned*. We learn our culture from our family, friends and teachers. It begins from the time we are born and includes the foods we eat, songs we sing, and games we play. It includes our beliefs and customs, our clothing and more. It is learned and handed down from one generation to another. It does not include the color of our eyes, hair and skin.

Our land resources influence the development of culture and influence changes in culture. Change also occurs as new cultures are introduced.

To begin the road toward understanding the complex nature of a culture, we must start with our own. This activity has students understanding what culture is by examining their own and finally seeing how land can also influence culture.

Anticipation

◆ Ask the students: *Can anyone tell me what culture is?*

◆ Discuss and explain that culture is the beliefs and ways of life of a group of people. It includes the foods people eat, songs they sing, games they play. It includes their religious beliefs, customs, and clothing. Culture is learned and begins from the moment we are born. Some things are learned from our immediate environment, and some are handed down from our ancestors — our family.

◆ Show the students the examples of your culture.

◆ Ask the students:

Are any of these things a part of your culture?

What is different in your culture?

Are the color of my eyes, hair and skin a part of my culture? (No)

Procedure

Part I

1. Explore with the students other examples that illustrate their culture.
2. Pass out the *My Culture* journal pages.
3. Have students fill out their journal page worksheet.
4. For homework, invite the students to bring in one example of their culture. This could be a food item, instrument, clothing, etc. They can use their journal page worksheet for ideas.

Part II

1. Have each student share their example. Ask students who did not bring in an example, to explain why the clothing they are wearing would be part of a culture. (T-shirts are part of the culture of the United States, etc.)
2. Ask the students:
 - a. *Where did you learn about your culture?*
(Friends, family, teachers, other students.)
 - b. *What country(ies) is (are) your family originally from?*
 - c. *Does this influence your culture?*
 - d. *How do some of your examples compare with others?*
3. Explore with the students how culture might be influenced by the land. (Climate, plants, animals, food/products, etc.)
4. Pass out the *Culture & the Land* journal pages.
5. Have students fill out their worksheet.
6. Discuss their answers.



My Culture

Figure C



People can be classified by one or all of these definitions:

Nationality A member of a nation that belongs to that nation because of birth, origin or naturalization. A nation can include more than one race, more than one culture and more than one ethnicity.

Race A group of people that share physical characteristics that are passed from one generation to the next by genes. You are **born** with these characteristics which include skin color, hair color and eye color. Race can include more than one culture, more than one ethnicity and more than one nationality.

Culture A group of people that share common beliefs, customs, arts, institutions, etc. These are **learned**, beginning at birth. Culture can include more than one ethnicity and more than one nationality.

Ethnicity This can include race, nationality or culture which set members of this group apart, usually from a larger community.

What I live in:

What languages I speak:

Music I like:

Family traditions:

Holidays I celebrate (optional):

What I like to eat:

Clothes I wear:

Toys I play with:



Family members who live with me:

Religion (optional):

Culture & The Land

Figure D

If you lived in the desert, near the ocean, or in the mountains, how might the land where you live influence your culture?

	Home I might live in	Food I might eat	Clothes I might wear	What I might do for fun
Desert				
				
Ocean				
				
Mountains				
